

## THE FALL OF ROME



# THE FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

# The Fall of the Roman Empire





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## 1. A Century of Crisis

- a. [Pax Romana](#) (Latin for Roman Peace) lasted from Augustus' rule in 27 BCE - Marcus Aurelius (180 CE)
- b. The rulers that followed were unable to manage the large empire and its growing problems.
- c. **Result:** The Roman Empire began to [decline](#)



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## 2. Problems

### a. Economic

- i. Trade was disrupted by hostile tribes and pirates
- ii. No new gold or silver sources = raise taxes
- iii. Created more money = inflation (bad)
- iv. Soil in Italy and Western Europe became increasingly less fertile



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## b. Political

- i. Citizens were losing their patriotism towards Rome
- ii. Government began to be controlled by military
- iii. Terrible emperors such as Nero murdered, raped, and impoverished their people



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## c. Social

- i. People were slowly losing their confidence in the Empire
- ii. Gap between rich and poor grew wider
- iii. Decline in interest in public affairs



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## d. Military

- i. Fewer funds for defense
- ii. Mercenaries (foreign soldiers) hired who accepted lower pay
- iii. Soldiers were less disciplined and loyal



# The Fall of the Roman Empire

## Multiple Causes: Fall of the Western Roman Empire

### Contributing Factors

#### Political

- Political office seen as burden, not reward
- Military interference in politics
- Civil war and unrest
- Division of empire
- Moving of capital to Byzantium

#### Social

- Decline in interest in public affairs
- Low confidence in empire
- Disloyalty, lack of patriotism, corruption
- Contrast between rich and poor
- Decline in population due to disease and food shortage

#### Economic

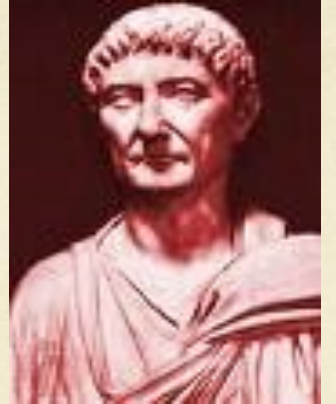
- Poor harvests
- Disruption of trade
- No more war plunder
- Gold and silver drain
- Inflation
- Crushing tax burden
- Widening gap between rich and poor and increasingly impoverished Western Empire

#### Military

- Threat from northern European tribes
- Low funds for defense
- Problems recruiting Roman citizens; recruiting of non-Romans
- Decline of patriotism and loyalty among soldiers



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## 3. Reform Attempted

### a. Emperor Diocletian

- i. Becomes emperor in 284 AD
- ii. Ruled with iron fist and limited personal freedoms
- iii. Doubled size of army
- iv. Sought to control inflation
- v. Divided empire in two: Greek Speaking East & Latin Speaking West





# Roman Empire Splits

See link on homework page for series of maps that show split



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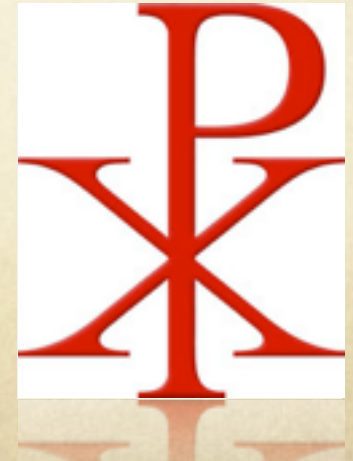




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## b. Emperor Constantine

- i. Embraced Christianity due to vision he had before battle
- ii. First Christian Roman emperor
- iii. Issued the Edict of Milan which allowed Christians to worship freely
- iv. Moves capital of empire east to Byzantium; builds new city
- v. New city is later renamed Constantinople (in modern day Turkey)
- vi. Eastern empire flourishes due to trade and wealth





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## 4. Western Empire Crumbles

- a. The decline of the Western Roman Empire took place over many years
- b. Final collapse was due to:
  - i. Worsening internal problems (remember economic, political, military, social problems?)
  - ii. The separation of the Western Empire from wealthier East
  - iii. Outside invasions





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### Immediate Cause

Invasion by Germanic tribes and by Huns

**FALL OF ROMAN EMPIRE**



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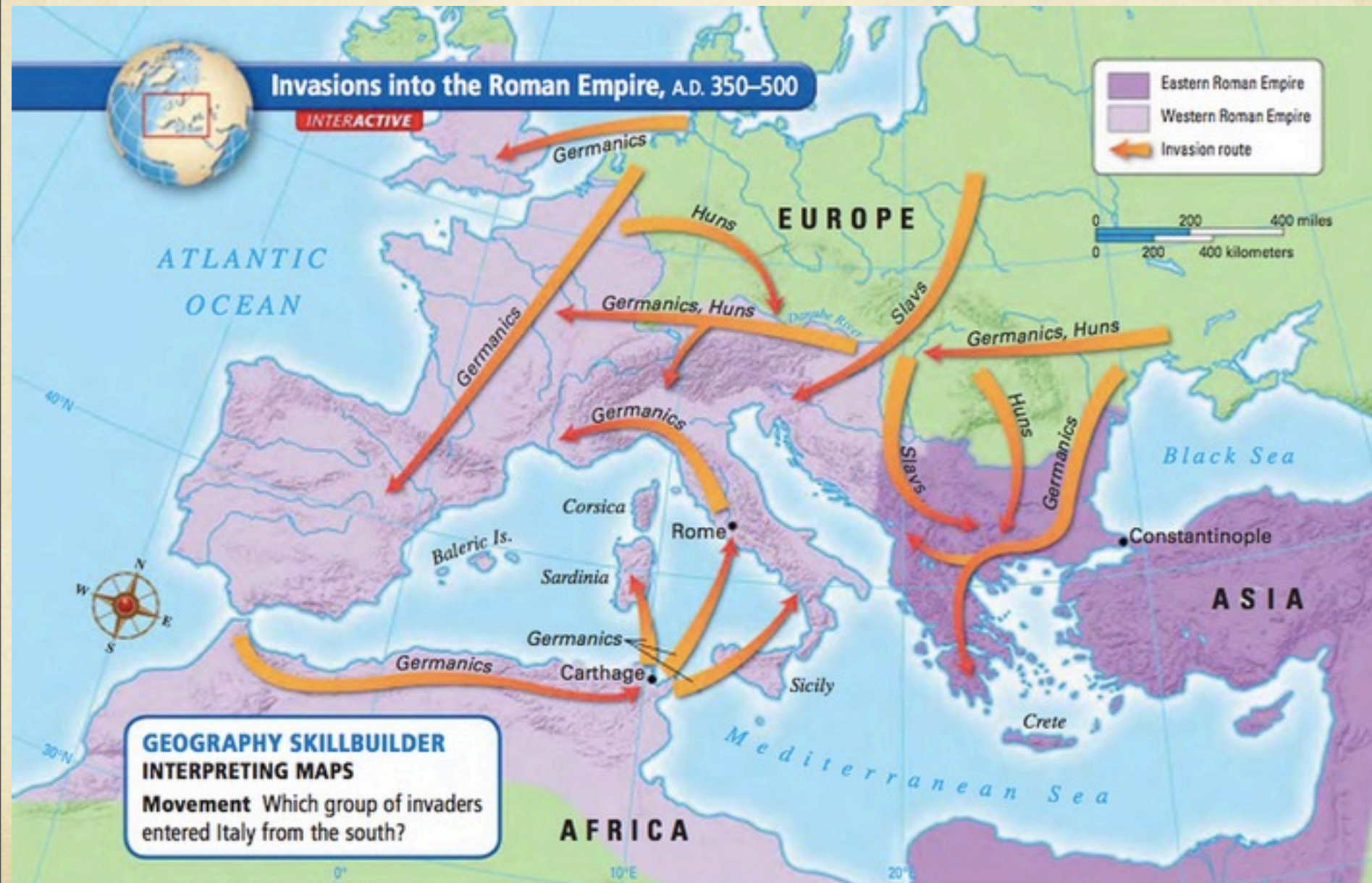
## c. Germanic Invasions

- i. Mongol nomads, The Huns, forced Germanic peoples on empire's borders to push into Roman lands
- ii. Last Roman Emperor, Romulus Augustulus, ousted by Germanic forces in 476 AD





# Invasion Routes





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- Result: The Western Roman Empire was no more but the eastern empire would continue to thrive as a region known today as Byzantium

